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it makes the truth a *living thing*, and wins its entrance into the mind; in art, by dramatising truth:—

> "Man no wise speaks to man
> Only to mankind. Art may tell a truth
> Obliquely, so the thing shall breed the thought,"

This is Browning's way of showing us, not only how good triumphed over evil, but even a deeper truth, viz., how evil, as represented by Guido, was necessary to bring out and develop the good in Pompilia and Caponsacchi. Had these three not been brought together, "one might have died a misused wife, one a poor noble of dubious character, one a high-bred but self-indulgent priest." *

Do we not feel as we put the book down that he has succeeded? That he has indeed told us a great truth; that a human document has been outspread before us, the very well-spring of human nature exposed: the heart of our common humanity, quivering, living, laid bare. The conception of four years' growth has come to full birth: his aim has been accomplished,—

> "To write a book shall mean beyond the facts,
> Suffice the eye and save the soul beside."

* See Nettleship's Essays on Browning.

A HOLIDAY IN CUMBERLAND.

By Mary L. Armitt.

LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK.

September 5th. To St. Bees, and the quiet hostelry near the shore, where a dip in the green wolds gives a view of the sea and of the great red sandstone headland. Inland, the view is peaceful, of long green wolds; of a long line of roofs below, where the little old town straggles its one street along; of the old priory church, nestling in trees, which is said, by its dedication to some forgotten Irish saint of the name of Bega, to have christened the town.

September 6th. We drove in search of the two churches of Beckermet, St. John and St. Bridget, along lonely ways and deep sandstone lanes, where bright orange Tansy or paler lemon Toadflax crowned the hedgerows, and where many a late summer flower pushed through or bloomed below the tangles of red fruited briar and black bramble. The strange thing is that so small a village should possess two churches; and the ancient history of the place is but meagrely lighted by the lantern of modern archæology. That both churches were of old foundation is proved by the fragments of antique crosses they contain. St. John stands on an eminence in the village itself. It was recently rebuilt, and in the flooring of the old church were found these discarded relics of an earlier age, broken pieces of a cross or crosses covered with interlacing ornament, of the type of the Gosforth cross, some few miles away, which is still fortunately standing intact and upright. St. Bridget is at a little distance, out of sight or hearing of man's dwelling, but with a great population below ground in its graveyard. It is a simple, low-pitched building, without ornament of any kind; but its look of antiquity makes it awesome. Modern life has receded from the spot: not even service is performed here now, except an occasional one for burial; and this relic of an ancient worship stands lowly, like a brooding mother, over the tottering lichen-stained tombs that surround it. Among these

many tombs, whose inscriptions are mostly illegible from the wear of ages of weather, we sought and found the two cross-fragments. Both stand totteringly in sockets; one is of red sandstone, and one of the white stone that is considered a sign of far older workmanship; but in both the pattern is barely discernible under patches of lichen. Could only stones tell their history! One indeed, the red sandstone one, is trying to do it. There are certainly letters engraved upon its face.*

September 7th. Bright, though still hazy. Walked to the little village of Rottington. Sheltered by green wolds and ample trees, this tiny place, only one mile from the sea, has a fat, rich air of inland rural prosperity. We passed through great herds of milch kine, peacefully grazing, then came to rows of corn-ricks, waiting for their thatching, and ample farmsteads; and to the big old corn-mill, filling all the hollow of the little brook. The mill sluice is carried through the place, and round the wall of a quaint old house, which it hugs like a moat. Bridged steps lead up to the garden of the house and the entrance, and a Latin inscription thereon asks God's blessing on those who enter. Ceterach fern grows in the nicks of the wall, and *Helosciadium nodiflorum* in the mill-stream, and Great Burr Reed in the brook. Flocks of little birds patrolled the place, Linnets, I believe, among them; certainly Greenfinches, Pipits, Pied Wagtails, and a stray Grey Wagtail or two, with hosts of Sparrows. There were likewise numbers of Swallows wheeling and prattling happily around. Four kinds of butterflies were on the wing and one moth. Two specimens of Scarlet Admiral rested long on one bunch of bright Ragwort flowers, and when one left its perch for awhile it had to seek and return to the flower. In a grassy hollow of the pastures, towards the sea, were a few Wheatears. It was necessary to be quiet to watch them flit upon the stones of the dyke and play about the stone steps of the stile.

* On returning, I referred to that interesting book, *Early Sculptured Crosses of Carlisle Diocese*, by Calverley and Collingwood. In it three renderings are given of the inscription on the cross, the work of different antiquaries. We may hope for another and more successful one. For a fortnight after our visit, Mr. Nicholson, the learned librarian of the Bodleian, Oxford, took photographs and rubbings from the stone.

September 8th. Wet at first, and wildly windy. Had to retreat from the top of the low cliffs that stretch southward from the headland. In the soft soil of these red cliffs, as well as of the further stretch that abuts upon the solid rock of the headland, I see numbers of nesting holes of the Sand-Martins. Where are the Martins? Gone already, before the Swallows?

September 10th. After rain in the night, a glorious hot day. Took train to Ravenglass, once the Roman haven of all these parts, where three rivers—the Esk, the Mite, and the Irt—unite for their entrance into the sea. But the harbour has silted up since Roman times, and only a tiny street of decrepit houses fronts—or backs—the estuary shore. We sought out the Roman ruin called Walls. It is hidden now in woods, and is ivy-shrouded. It stands to the height yet of from eight to ten feet. The entrances from without and between the various apartments are intact, as well as the drain; and the alcove of one apartment, where once a statue (of some god or goddess, no doubt) stood, is plain to be seen, though the inside plastering has of course gone. The miracle is that so much stands. It is true that the mortar that holds the blocks of red sandstone together is like rock, and that fallen masses lie cohesive and unbroken. (The mortar, by the way, is of two kinds—one made of sea-washed pebbles, the other of broken red Roman tile.) Two reasons there are that the place has been spared: one, that Ravenglass steadily fell back after Roman times, and building materials would be a drug in the village; and another that it would be easier to cut the soft red stone out of the solid rock of the neighbourhood, than to part these slabs from their crust of Roman mortar. Man may have advanced by many a mechanical method since Roman times, but it is doubtful whether he can any longer build so as to defy time.

Over the brambles and the bushes many spiders had spread their cob-webs, and some hung to the centre. One species interested me very much. It was busy bridging the spaces between the walls. Stationed on some prominent part it spun a web line, which floated away on the breeze; and when this floating line caught on any object, ivy-bush or wall, the spider crossed upon it and so found new ground.

We emerged from the wood upon the quiet estuary, higher up the Esk than the village. The tide was just running out,

leaving mud and wrack exposed; and wading birds, whose voices we had heard before we reached the shore, were flying down and spreading over to feed. The long, sweet quaver of the Curlew, that one knows best in the fell heather of its breeding haunts, made the place musical; and there to be sure was the big bird winging across, wading in the shallows, or dibbling with its long curved beak in the wrack. Then over and over, as they came down stream, sounded the wild, most melancholy note of the Redshanks; a clear incisive *Tu-er, tu-er*, followed by a more continuous sound as they flitted, in the manner of a Sandpiper, along the marge. They mostly rested, however, quiescent, and their brown bodies were hard to distinguish, even with glasses, upon the background. But their red legs showed, and the pale rump-patch and underparts when they flew. Then came a garrulous pair of Oyster-catchers, noisy and easy to see; while a Herring-gull, seated on a stone, raised voice and head and called vociferously, like a donkey braying. The great conspicuous Herons, immovable at various turns of the narrowing river, were silent, and so were the Cormorants, that—one, two, three—came beating down by wing to drop at the fuller bend of the river, where they began to fish. Once down under water the Cormorant is scarcely seen; for head and neck alone emerge for a second, and often at another spot. The pretty Red Centaury grew along the shore, and the botanist had a joy all her own, by reaching a salting where many sea-plants grew—Sea-sandwort, Sea-aster, Sea-lavender, Sea-rush, Sea-purslane, Glasswort, Hemlock Stork's Bill, *Erodium cicutarium*, with *Plantago maritima* and *Coronopus*.

September 11th. On the red rocks of the headland, watching the tide seethe about the fallen blocks of sandstone. Where the bay, with its fine beach of pebbles, curves to the rocks, the Rock Pipits are always about, pecking in the fringe of sea-weed left by the tide, or flitting with a cry of *zip, zip*, up the precipices of red. It is very difficult to find any distinct difference between them and the Meadow-pipits, which are also at hand on the wolds. The Rock Pipit maybe is duskier; there is an olive cast in its browns, and the lines of white along the tail, that are so marked in the Meadow when flying, are only partial in it. A little dog scampering up the cliff put the Pipits to flight, and showed me another

little bird, winging round in distress. It was a Sand-Martin, whose little ones were still helpless in one of the many holes of the cliff! I watched it later return to feed them; and they must be nearly fledged, as they were evidently waiting for the food at the entrance. Poor little mother!—for doubtless it is the mother; how anxious she must be getting about time, when all her associates of the summer, even her mate and, probably, the stronger half of her brood, are gone!

A magnificent sunset, with the Isle of Man visible, a magic purple land across the sea. Tide out, and reaches of fine hard sand, with pools that brought the glowing sun in a pathway to one's feet. Walked the sands till we came to a great school of Gulls, settling as if for sleep upon a bank. Grey gulls, brown gulls, white gulls there were, each one fluttering its wings before it settled. Several Cormorants—Scarfs they are called here—flew along the wave-line towards the headland, no doubt to roost. I was glad to see, too, a small party of Sand-Martins about the cliffs, showing that all are not yet finally left.

September 12th. The little mother Sand-Martin has got her young abroad this morning: only two there are—no doubt the weaklier half of the brood—and every now and then she comes leading them back to their nest-hole in the cliff, and lets them rest their young wings there awhile. Below, on the last curve of the pebbled beach, where the Rock Pipits flit, is a Ringed Plover. The Pipits settle on the brown sea-wrack, where their dark brown coats conceal them. The little Plover settles on the stones, and relies on them for protection. The stones of the St. Bees' beach, by the way, are a delightful study in themselves. Much of one size, rounded and wave-worn, they show every variety of colour: grey and red granites, blue slates, slates mottled with white, blood-stones, white quartz, all are mixed together,—the epitome surely of the whole of the geology of the lake-mountains, as furnished by glacial deposits carried down streams, and sifted and arranged by the ever-moving ocean. And when wet, either by tide or rain, these stones form almost a brilliant mosaic of colours. Still, on a sunshiny morning like this, their general expanse shows as light grey, with faint shadows to mark their outlines. And as soon as the little Ringed Plover, which to our surprise has risen close

by us, and is, as long as its long curved sand-piper wings are in motion, plainly visible—as soon as it settles on the stones, it is lost to view. If we take our eyes from the spot even to fix our glasses, we cannot detect again the little bird, so like is it to its surroundings. The most conspicuous of its markings, even the white and black collar that rings its neck, assists at the disguise. For that collar cuts in two the line that in general most clearly reveals the bird-form, the dark line which curves down from head to back; and by means of it the Ringed Plover becomes to the eye at once, when it settles, two rounded stones; one stone the head, a larger stone the body. Thin legs make no effect in the glare of sunshine. However, if you give the little Ringed Plover time, it will begin to trip about with a light and fairy-like tread. Then one sees the very curious gesture it has in the jerk backward of its head, as if pulled by reins from behind; or as if it were a toy on a pedestal, forced back by pressure on the squeaking-board. Had to wait for the tide to drop to go round the rocks of the headland. Sea-spleenwort fern grows in cracks of the precipitous rock; Sea-campion trails over from above; and the blood-red Geranium aloft still bears a flower or two. Great spiders (*Epuia patagiata*, I believe) have spun cob-webs about the lower precipices, and one or two hang to the centre of the web. Driving to Ennerdale, the Wall-rue fern was seen growing like grass in the crevices of walls.

THE TEACHING OF POETRY TO CHILDREN.

By Mrs. J. G. Simpson.

There are no doubt people whose poetic taste is so true and deep, that no amount of neglect in early life has been able to prevent its being the ruling passion of their lives, but it is nevertheless true, that in the majority of cases the real love of poetry may be traced to tastes implanted in childhood. Nor is it less true, that only a small number of parents seem to realise this. Either they have no real love of poetry themselves or they do not understand that beautiful words and sounds appeal to children to a remarkable degree. Every one knows how easily children learn by heart and that a verse of poetry repeated to them two or three times is fixed in their memories without further trouble, but why do people seem to imagine that they prefer doggrel, or that somehow or other doggrel is easier for them to learn than poems which clothe their ideas in beautiful language? Personally I believe in teaching children, or rather in allowing children to learn, a great deal by heart of which they cannot possibly understand the meaning, but even granting that it is easier for a child to learn something he understands, why need it be rhymed prose of the baldest and dullest description? In an interesting paper reported in the *Parents' Review* as having been read at the recent Conference, it is suggested that in teaching a child to read, you should "be careful to choose lines that will interest and amuse him and appeal to his imagination." By all means. It is most important that we should do so. But what are the lines instanced?

> "The friendly cow all red and white
> I love with all my heart,
> She gives me cream with all her might,
> To eat with apple tart."

The appeal here is I am afraid more to the stomach than to the imagination! but why, why, in the name of